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SUBJECT: Badghis Chief Prosecutor Alleges Widespread Corruption

Ref: 08 Kabul 2436

Summary  
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¶1. (SBU) During a recent meeting with the PRT, Badghis' chief prosecutor, Gaws Mohammad, detailed a disturbing portrait of wide-scale corruption and neglect within the province, singling out Governor Mohammad Ashraf Naseri, among several other provincial officials, for his alleged misappropriation of at least twenty-four thousand dollars in Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) funds. Mohammad also advised of an alleged plot to kill him upon his return to Badghis province following a three-week stay in Kabul. PRT has no independent verification of Mohammad's assertions.

Portrait of an Advocate for Change  
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¶2. (U) Born in Qades district of Badghis province, Gaws Mohammad (Mohammad), a Tajik, has spent most of his career in Kabul. He has extensive legal education, training, and experience. Unlike most provincial officials in Badghis, he has demonstrated a sincere interest in working to improve governance and rule of law during his short tenure as prosecutor. In October, for example, he traveled to Qades district to meet with the district governor, the local prosecutor and judge to discuss ways to improve their working conditions and to secure their participation in Department of Justice-sponsored training held in Qal-e-Naw in early November.

¶3. (SBU) Mohammad served for two years as the chief prosecutor in Ghor province, working closely with the Lithuanian-led PRT to improve rule of law and to combat corruption in the underdeveloped western province. He was appointed to Badghis in early October, replacing the former chief prosecutor who was widely regarded as corrupt.

Harsh Criticism of Provincial Government  
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¶4. (SBU) Mohammad noted that during his initial two months as chief prosecutor, he had not yet observed any positive contributions by Governor Naseri. He added that the Afghan National Police (ANP) is weak and ineffective in Badghis largely because the provincial police chief, General Ayub, lacks the requisite leadership for the job and also fails to support the prosecutor's office. He summed up Governor Naseri's management of the province as "a feudal system with tribal leaders." He described the provincial government as operating 95 percent outside the GIROA-based processes. He complained of a lack of support from the National Directorate of Security (NDS) representatives and lamented that no one in the province seemed to care about governance.

## Allegations of Corruption

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15. (SBU) Refreshingly candid in his assessment of the weak links in the provincial government, Mohammad mentioned that while in Kabul he requested the Ministry of Justice send a team of prosecutors to Badghis to investigate Governor Naseri's potential misuse of government funds. He estimated, at a minimum, that Naseri had misappropriated approximately twenty-four thousand dollars in IDLG funds. He also identified several other provincial and district officials who he claims are engaged in corruption: Police Chief General Ayub, Line Minister for Agriculture Arifi (a former governor of Badghis), Line Minister for Rehabilitation and Rural Development (RRD) Said Rasoul Akbari, the Line Minister for Social Affairs, Deputy Governor Sabiri Abdul Ghani, every district administrator, and the Head of the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Badghis, an Afghan national, who he claims misallocates humanitarian food aid for personal gain.

## Alleged Assassination Plot

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16. (SBU) During his absence from the province, Mohammad learned of an alleged plot to plant explosives in his new office located just around the corner from the PRT compound in the center of Qal-e-Naw. Two weeks before his return, he insisted that someone called him to inform him of the rumor that he was going to be killed when he returned to Badghis. A week later, he received a letter from the police in Qal-e-Naw advising him of the alleged plot to kill him. He emphatically stated that insurgents were not behind the plot to kill him. Instead, he explained that individuals within his office,

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corrupt staff members, were conspiring to get rid of him. He indicated that he had already ordered one cleaner who works in his office to be arrested.

## COMMENT

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17. (SBU) Rumors of corruption are not new to Badghis province. Governor Naseri's predecessor was charged with misappropriation of government funds and served several months in jail in Kabul. There have been persistent allegations of the Line Minister of Agriculture's involvement in and oversight of the illegal harvest of Badghis' public pistachio forests and general allegations of Governor Naseri's misuse of government funds. A novel concept, however, in this largely ignored and undeveloped western province is the existence of an Afghan official like Mohammad who is willing to stand up to endemic corruption and use the judicial system to ferret out corrupt officials to improve governance and restore Afghans' faith in their government.

WOOD